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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides teachers with models for interactive reading activities that reflect an awareness of comprehension as a complex mental and linguistic process rather than as a hierarchy of mechanically applied subskills. The instructional strategies represent a combination of insights presented in recent research with those gained through practical classroom experience. The strategies are: open-ended and student-generated questioning to sharpen focus; using key words as semantic, syntactical, and relational cues; using the cloze procedure in predicting and confirming relationships among cues; categorizing as a process for organizing information; modeling concept attainment; and summarizing and paraphrasing. Many of the model activities stress oral and written activities such as retelling, summarizing, condensing, and expanding on meanings that help students to organize and verbalize understandings gained through active processing. (FL)

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COMPREHENSION THROUGH ACTIVE PROCESSING:

A SET OF INTERACTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS

These models have been developed as part of a Bureau of Reading Education project. They will be used experimentally and will be evaluated in conjunction with the field trials of the Degrees of Reading Power Test.

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In addition, Thomas Fitzgerald, P. J. Hutchins, Renee Levitt, Sam Shohen and Alberta Slegaitis of the Bureau of Reading Education developed activities which were also tested in various classrooms and workshops throughout the State. Philip M. Connors, Enfield School District, Connecticut, contributed both time and a classroom try-out for some of these strategies.

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FOREWORD

This publication provides the teacher with models for interactive reading activities which reflect growing awareness that comprehension is a complex mental and linguistic process which cannot be factored into a hierarchy of mechanically applied sub-skills. Such a view of comprehension suggests that meaningful instruction goes far beyond elementary decoding and isolated workbook practice.

While useful in some stages of instruction and reinforcement, applying skills such as finding the main idea or making inferences in isolation of other skills does not assure that more generalized comprehension abilities will result.

Research tells us that readers not only interact with, but also act upon, reading materials; interpreting, extracting, synthesizing, expanding, or condensing the meaning in their own words or thoughts for their own purposes.

Good instruction therefore provides for deeper reading, drawing upon many complex strategies for comprehending meaningful text. In response to a growing concern about the effectiveness of some present practices, the State Education Department has worked with teacher committees from Community School District #8 (Bronx), Port Jervis, Guilderland, Ticonderoga and West Islip in a cooperative project called Comprehension Through Active Processing. Materials illustrating several strategies for improving reading comprehension which reflect this viewpoint were developed in this project and have been incorporated in this publication.

The instructional strategies included provide students with a variety of procedures for arriving at understandings which can be integrated into their own store of knowledge and which can, in turn, be communicated meaningfully to others. These strategies include: categorization as a process for organizing information; using key words as semantic, syntactic and relational cues; using the "cloze" procedure in predicting and confirming relationships among cues; summarizing and paraphrasing; modelling concept attainment; open-ended and student generated questions to sharpen focus. In many instances these strategies are adaptable to a speaking/listening modality for beginning or less able readers. All are intended to increase the degree of verbal and written interaction with print in the classroom.

Each strategy represents a combination of insights provided in recent research with those gained through practical classroom experience. No one is viewed as an end in itself. While the illustrative activities are geared more frequently toward middle grades, the procedures can be adapted for use with both younger and more mature readers.

The same procedures can be used in developing similar activities using materials drawn from literature, social and physical sciences, and

other disciplines at all levels.

While a strategy is initially described separately in a learning activity, it is useful to the reader only when used in combination with other pre-organizing and analytic and summative strategies.

Many of these model activities stress oral and written activities such as retelling, summarizing, condensing and expanding on meanings, since these procedures help the students to organize and verbalize understandings gained through active processing.

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OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questioning encourages students to use personal attitudes, feelings and expectations as aids to understanding. As they examine their experiences and relate them to materials they have read, they develop literal, interpretive and creative levels of understanding. Open-ended questions are best used in informal discussion where the teacher acts as a facilitator and all student responses are accepted without criticism. As students share their knowledge and interact with each other, comprehension will be enhanced and the experiential base will be broadened.

Orientation to circle procedure
Setting climate
Interacting with ideas in print
Speaking and listening
Talking about books

ORIENTATION TO CIRCLE PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

Informal discussion in a group (circle) provides practice for active listening; that is, listening to hear meaning as well as words.

PROCEDURE

1. Begin by setting the climate for this kind of informal grouping. Explain to the class that the teacher will act only as a facilitator and that it is important for the students to become involved so that their views may be discussed openly. Stress the need for tolerance and understanding of everyone's views.

2. Explain that the circles may serve three purposes; namely, problem-solving, open-ended questioning, diagnosis.

3. Provide examples and elicit others from the students.

   Examples:

   Problem-solving Circles

   What was your greatest problem in reading this story? Was the vocabulary difficult? Were there ideas you didn't understand?

   Open-ended Circles

   How do you account for your likes and dislikes in reading? What story or television show have you really enjoyed? Have your tastes in television viewing changed in the last two years? in reading?

   Diagnostic Circles

   Did the title of "The Gift of the Magi" have more than one meaning? What does "magi" mean? Were the wise men truly wise to bring the babe gifts of myrrh and gold and frankincense? What kind of gifts do we usually give people? How does this relate to the gifts given by the two main characters in the story?

4. Set up the rules that will be used for circles.

   - To help create a more friendly climate, students are asked to call each other by name.
   - Each person may have a chance to speak.
   - Everyone listens courteously.
   - Anyone can give up a turn to speak.

5. Have students bring chairs and form a circle.

6. When the circle is first initiated, students may be given name cards to pin on.

7. Give each student a blank 3" x 5" card and ask them to draw a picture of something that is important. Ask each to show and explain his/her card.

8. Ask open-ended questions such as: What did you learn about a person that you did not know before? How did you feel when you saw that person's card?

EVALUATION

Students show a willingness to cooperate. They respond and listen to each other.

SETTING CLIMATE

PURPOSE

The climate should provide effective ways to talk with students about books/print. Every student needs to think about ideas in print, and can do so through personal responses by using the strategy of open-ended questioning. Perceptive, personalizing questions give students the opportunity to reveal the depth of their own feelings and the value of their critical thinking about issues important to them as readers.

PROCEDURE

Using circle seating to facilitate interaction and circle rules for participation, present such questions as the following:

What is reading? Why do you read?

What would it be like if there were no books? no print?

How would it affect your learning?

What can we all do to help ourselves become better readers? To help others? Will you do it? When? What do we need to do as a class/group to make this happen?

EVALUATION

Are all responses accepted nonjudgmentally by the members of the group and by the teacher? Did the class arrive at a set of suggestions for becoming better readers and organize a plan to do it?

INTERACTING WITH IDEAS IN PRINT

PURPOSE

Reading is interacting with ideas in print and determining the worth of those ideas. It is a process of communicating with an author, and evaluating the message received. Group discussions allow exploration of different perceptions of an author's meaning. It is crucial that all interpretations be accepted as the students' contributions and that a climate is set for exploring and weighing alternatives. The focus is to help students think and decide, independently, cooperatively, responsibly in a relevant, caring way.

PROCEDURE

1. Using any brief reading selection such as "Mary White" by William Allan White, stimulate interaction through such questions as:

   What do you think was the most important idea in this essay? What do you think the author was saying? What seems to you to be the most important thing that has happened? How does the author feel about it? If you had been in the author's place, how would you have felt? How will this essay show you a new way of looking at life? How will it affect your reactions?

2. Develop other open-ended circles using longer works that help the students to interact with ideas.

   Example: The Pearl by John Steinbeck

   Consider the problem of Kino, an Indian living in a society dominated by the Spanish. What is the attitude of the doctor toward him? the priest? the pearl buyer? What would you have done in Kino's place? In what way does his life illustrate the causes of revolution? Compare this story to Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, or to the causes of the American Revolution.

EVALUATION

Did the students offer different perceptions of problems and feelings? Could the students relate interpretations to causes of the American Revolution and compare them to other events or stories?

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

PURPOSE

Communication that is direct, honest, and open, encourages an awareness between speaker and receiver and allows each freedom of choice and action. The results are more positive for everyone concerned.

PROCEDURE

1. Explore the nature of communication - what it is - how it functions and what may be done to improve it. Help students to establish relationships based on cooperation, freedom of expression and honesty.

2. Using the rules for circles, present the following kinds of questions:

   What is communication?

   Are there varying kinds of communication? Explain.

   What makes it easier for you to communicate with some people than with others?

   Is there anyone you know with whom you feel free to talk about anything?

   Why is it easy to talk to this person?

   What do you do to make this good communication happen?

   Why is it harder to talk to some people than to others?

   What may you sometimes do to make it difficult for people to talk to you?

   How does it feel to talk and really be heard? Not heard?

   Is there anything you can do to help people hear you?

   Do you think you might try these suggestions? When? With whom?

EVALUATION

Did students freely interact with the group? Were realistic suggestions for improving communication generated?

TALKING ABOUT BOOKS

PURPOSE

Book talks give students an opportunity to discuss their reading with others, verbalize ideas about the author's intent, and provide an outlet for judgments about the worth of any work.

The goal of the book talk is to expand the students' thinking. Clarification of values takes place as the students evaluate and judge their <u>own</u> feelings, attitudes and behaviors, using the content of the book as a basis for discussion.

PROCEDURE

1. Each participant enters the group with a book he/she has read.

2. Each participant identifies his book to the group by citing title and author. A go-around format can be used.

3. In a second go-around, each student may share one important event from the book by locating the place where that event is described and by reading a brief excerpt. This is the literal/defining level of comprehension, i.e., understanding the facts as stated in print.

4. Then move into the interpretive/personalizing level of comprehension by asking: What kinds of stories did we choose to read? Were they real or make believe? What do we seem to like to read most? Why do we like these the best?

EVALUATION

In using open-ended circles as a technique, the following questions may help the teacher organize and evaluate the success of the strategy:

1. Have the children been able to identify their tastes in reading and justify the reasons for them?

2. Were the ground rules democratically established?

3. Were the ground rules followed? Why/Why not? What made that happen?

4. How many students interacted? What were the factors that promoted/retarded interaction?

5. Were you able to serve as an impartial leader? What behaviors as leader made that happen/not happen?

6. Was there an atmosphere of respect for self and others? How was that demonstrated?

7. Was the discussion relevant to its purpose?

8. Were the questions really <u>open</u>, or were they "loaded"?

STUDENT-GENERATED QUESTIONING

Student-generated questioning capitalizes on natural curiosity about unfamiliar material. As students see purpose in raising questions and learn to ask questions which focus on specifics in content and on higher level thinking related to specifics, they gain independence in working with materials which will expand their experiential background.

To generate useful questions, students must become aware of their value, learn how to pose good questions, and use them to guide their reading. Student-generated questions aid in analyzing, or processing information at literal, interpretive and creative levels.

BUILDING AWARENESS

- Using curiosity to stimulate questioning
- Recognizing the value of asking questions before reading
- Understanding how questions extend the meaning of a passage or selection

HELPING STUDENTS ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

- Revising questions while listening
- Acking appropriate questions
- Using titles to elicit questions
- Using student-generated questions as an aid in processing information in a reading selection
- Applying what has been learned about questioning
- Using student-generated questions in studying units in any content area

BUILDING AWARENESS

USING CURIOSITY TO STIMULATE QUESTIONING

PURPOSE

As students generate questions about an unknown object, they learn that asking questions reduces the number of possible responses, making the appropriate response obvious to the questioner.

PROCEDURE

1. Show the students a box or a wrapped object which will be unfamiliar to most of them even when revealed.

2. Ask them to generate a set of questions about the content of the box or package which might help them to identify the content. Record questions without comment or response.

3. Display the unwrapped object but do not offer any information about its nature or use. Have students generate a second list of questions about the object now that they have seen it.

4. Name the object and explain its use. Elicit a third set of questions which will expand their understanding of the object and its function.

EVALUATION

Evaluate the three sets of questions using the following criteria:

Which questions limited the choice of response most quickly?

Which questions produced information which would provoke further questions?

How did the questions change as more information was provided?

How was previous experience or knowledge used in asking questions in each succeeding set?

RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF ASKING QUESTIONS BEFORE READING

PURPOSE

Through guided practice, students will become aware of the value of asking questions before reading as a means for focusing attention on important information as they read.

PROCEDURE

1. Give the class two short reading passages. Giving no further direction, have them read the first passage silently.

2. After they have read the passage, ask each student to respond to three or four critical and interpretive comprehension questions without looking at the passage.

3. Before reading the second passage, present the questions they will be asked to answer after they have read the second passage.

4. After the passage has been read and responses to the set of questions completed as in Step 2., discuss their experience using the following questions as a guide:

   a. How did knowing the questions before you read the second passage help you in reading the passage?

   b. Did knowing the questions make the passage easier to read?

   c. Did knowing the questions help you to recall what you had read more easily?

EVALUATION

Students will respond with greater accuracy to questions on the second passage because the questions focused their attention on information relevant to the purpose of the reading lesson.

UNDERSTANDING HOW QUESTIONS EXTEND THE MEANING OF A PASSAGE OR SELECTION

PURPOSE

By examining questions about a reading selection such as The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes, students will identify some questions as literal, requiring identification of explicitly stated facts, and others as interpretive, requiring the student to examine facts and draw inferences, predict or explain implicit meanings related to these facts.

PROCEDURE

1. Before reading the selection The Hundred Dresses, introduce the following set of questions as a guide for post-reading discussion:

   a. Why did Maddie want Peggy to stop playing the dresses game?

   b. Who were the main characters in this story?

   c. Why does the author have Wanda and her family move away?

   d. What color was the dress that Wanda always wore?

   e. Does Maddie play the dresses game for the same reason that Peggy does?

   f. Why did Wanda say she had a hundred dresses when she really did not?

   g. Why does Peggy start and continue to lead the dresses game?

   h. Why does the author make Wanda a more talented artist than Peggy?

   i. If you were in Wanda's class, would you have played the dresses game?

   j. Why does the author make Peggy pretty and popular and make Wanda plain and friendless?

2. Have students read the selection either in class or as a homework assignment.

3. After reading, have students answer the questions orally or in written form.

*Estes, Eleanor. The Hundred Dresses. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1974.

4. Analyze the questions and responses.

   a. Which questions required you to give the facts of the story?

   b. Which questions required you to use the facts of the story in developing an answer of your own which extended beyond facts?

   c. Which questions made you examine the author's intentions?

   d. Which questions made the reader become a part of the story?

RESPONSE KEY

Questions a, b and d require factual answers.

Question a also requires thinking which extends beyond the facts.

Questions c, e, f, g, h, i and j also require thinking beyond the relating of fact.

Questions c, h and i require the reader to assess the author's intent.

Question i requires the reader to assume a role in the story.

EVALUATION

Students have identified appropriate purposes for each of the questions.

HELPING STUDENTS ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

REVISING QUESTIONS WHILE LISTENING

PURPOSE

Thinking and formulating questions about a passage before, during and after reading are important aids to comprehension. Students should become aware that questions change as information is acquired and that some early questions were not relevant and some additional questions need to be formulated.

PROCEDURE

1. Give students only the title of the selection and ask what questions it brings to mind. List these questions.

2. Read a paragraph or two of the selection aloud. Have students identify any of the questions listed which have been answered.

3. Add new questions, suggested by the opening paragraphs.

4. After listening to another portion of the selection, stop and follow the same procedure, indicating questions which have been answered and adding newly generated ones.

5. Consider the unanswered questions. Eliminate those which are inappropriate and not likely to be answered.

6. Continue reading to the conclusion of the selection.

7. Have the students discuss the reasons why some questions remained unanswered. Were they aware that their questions changed as they gained information? Did they feel that revised questioning aided listening comprehension?

EVALUATION

Students have recognized and responded to the need to revise questions which guide further understanding in the light of information they have heard.

ASKING APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

PURPOSE

Students will learn to ask appropriate questions to gain information about an immediate interest.

PROCEDURE

1. Have each student think of some famous person, historical or present-day, in any field (i.e. sports, arts, etc.) that he would like to meet.

2. Have each student put that person's name on top of the paper.

3. Ask the student to pretend that he has a magical chance to meet and interview this person. Allow the students a period of time to complete a set of questions they might ask.

4. Talk a few minutes about the types of questions that would or would not give much information. Students should come to realize that some questions are not important in getting to know the person.

5. Have students evaluate their questions and select the five which they will be allowed to ask.

EVALUATION

Let some of the students share their questions with the class.

USING TITLES TO ELICIT QUESTIONS

PURPOSE

Students will read the title and generate questions to be confirmed by reading the passage.

PROCEDURE

1. Show the students one or more short reading selections with interesting titles such as Windjammer William,* The Lost Tribe,** Indian Two Feet and His Horse.***

2. Ask the class to think about the title and share questions which come to mind. Ask leading questions such as:

   Do you know what the words in the title mean?

   What do you think a book with this title is going to be about?

   After reading the title, what questions would you ask about the book before you read it?

3. List students' questions as they are raised. Ask children to read the selection to see if the selection answers any of their questions.

4. Discuss the degree to which they had correctly anticipated the content of the selection.

EVALUATION

Students will discover that some questions were answered and some were not, but that reading to see whether questions were answered helped them to concentrate on the details in the story. In a similar way, students may use illustrations, chapter headings and sub-headings, tables of contents to generate pre-reading questions which anticipate the nature of the content to be read.

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* McLaughlin, Lorrie, Windjammer William, Vistas. New York: Scott, Foresman, 1965, 16-24.

** Herber, Harold, The Lost Tribe, Go: Reading in the Content Areas. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1973, 88-89.

*** Friskey, Margaret, Indian Two Feet and His Horse. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1964.

USING STUDENT-GENERATED QUESTIONS AS AN AID IN PROCESSING INFORMATION IN A READING SELECTION

PURPOSE

As students read, they will revise their pre-reading questions in the light of information gained and refocus their attention as needed to acquire further understanding of a passage.

PROCEDURE

1. Using any relevant reading selection for which students have generated pre-reading questions such as Windjammer William or The Lost Tribe, have the students read a portion of the selection stopping at a logical point for reflection on what has been read.

2. Have students examine their pre-reading questions to see which are already answered, which seem likely to be answered in the remainder of the passage and which are unlikely to be answered.

3. Have them revise their questions and generate additional questions which they feel are likely to be answered before the passage is concluded.

4. Have students finish reading the selection.

5. Have students identify questions which have been answered.

6. Ask students to identify most helpful questions. Compare the second set of questions with those they asked first. How did the questions change as more information was given in the story?

EVALUATION

As students gain more information, their questions become more specific and more likely to be answered.

APPLYING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED ABOUT QUESTIONING

PURPOSE

By generating questions which would help them to review the facts, interpret the action in a selection, examine the author's intent and apply the facts of the situation in light of their own experience, students will write questions as an aid for other readers in comprehending at literal, interpretive and application levels.

PROCEDURE

1. Assign a selection to be read and have students generate 5 - 10 questions about the selection which will require other readers to recall facts, examine the author's purpose, extend their thinking and apply the facts to situations in their own experience.

2. Classify student questions as in the first exercise. If needed, help students generate additional questions to illustrate other levels of comprehension which may be attained.

EVALUATION

Students were able to formulate questions requiring several levels of thinking.

USING STUDENT-GENERATED QUESTIONS IN STUDYING UNITS IN ANY CONTENT AREA

PURPOSE

Students' learning is enhanced when students initiate and monitor their own learning by generating questions, seeking responses and evaluating both questions and responses as they pursue group and individual investigations related to the unit.

PROCEDURE

1. Using a commonly shared experience such as a field trip, film or TV presentation to provide motivation, have students generate sets of questions which are related to the experience and require further investigation by large or small groups.

2. Help the students to evaluate and categorize their questions. Organize these questions into a guide to be used as the students begin further investigation.

3. Have students read one or more common assignments using the question guide.

4. Help students identify questions answered in the reading assignments, revise and refine the question guide.

5. Following the whole group experience:

   a. Select several key questions worthy of further study.

   b. Discuss possible resources.

   c. Divide into small groups for in-depth investigation of one or two questions.

   d. Have each group formulate four or five additional questions related to the key question.

   e. Have small group conduct investigations, and report back to whole group.

6. Evaluate what has been learned by referring to the original question guide to see whether the questions were answered.

EVALUATION

Students learn to use self-generated questions as an aid to investigation of selected topics.

KEY WORDS

Key words are those which are essential to the meaning of a sentence or paragraph. They are those words which are needed to restate the message. They may also indicate the flow or the relationship of ideas. Students may attend to key words in sentences differently than to those in paragraphs they might focus on relationships among sentences. Thus, instruction in the use of key words should be applied at both sentence and paragraph levels.

Listening for key words
Stick figures and key words
Key words in sentences
Newspaper headlines
Signal words
Key words in paragraphs

LISTENING FOR KEY WORDS

PURPOSE

Students should recognize key words in sentences presented orally.

PROCEDURE

Prepare a set of sentences varying in length and complexity from simple to complex.

1. Read the simplest sentence in the set to the group.
2. Ask the class to select the words that are absolutely necessary in this sentence. Explain that they should listen for words that name a person or a thing and tell what that person or thing is doing.
3. Discuss the reasons why certain words are more important than others to the meaning of the sentence.
4. Repeat the first three steps with the remaining sentences.

Example:

a. The boy hit Mrs. Brown's cat and ran home.
b. He told his mother that the cat had scratched him.
c. "She's a mean old lady," Billy said, "and her cat is mean, too."
d. His mother shook her head as if she didn't believe him.

EVALUATION

Do students evidence an understanding of the concept of the key words? Can they identify the words which bear the most meaning?

STICK FIGURES AND KEY WORDS

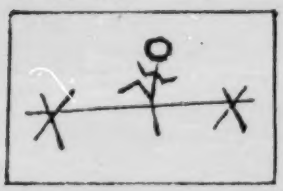
PURPOSE

Students will identify key words in a sentence by studying stick figures.

PROCEDURE

1. Show stick drawings which illustrate some key words in sentences written on the chalkboard.

   Example:



   Jim's first thought was of food as he eagerly jumped the old fence down near the pond.
   (Possible choices: Jim, jumped, fence)

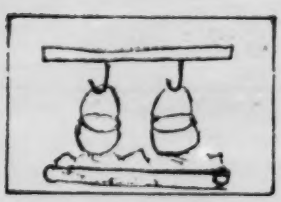
2. Ask students to identify the words in the sentence which they see in the drawing.

3. Direct students to discuss and compare words selected.

4. Have students read sentences related to other drawings and select key words.

   Examples:

   Home from school for only an hour and sitting in a comfortable easy chair, Terry was already finishing reading her mystery book about the Indians of the Southwest.
   (Possible choices: Terry, book, chair, sitting, reading)



   Huge pots and kettles hung over the open fire in the log cabins nestled in the woods.
   (Possible choices: pots, hung, over, fire)

5. Record the words selected for each sentence on the chalkboard.

EVALUATION

Are students able to use stick drawings as an aid in identifying key words? Do they find that drawings clearly represent the essential elements? Can they locate key words by using the stick drawings?

KEY WORDS IN SENTENCES

PURPOSE

Students will be aware of the fact that certain words are more important than others to the meaning of the message.

PROCEDURE

1. Discuss the concept and purpose of a telegram, how brevity and choice of words are critical.

2. Display and read examples of actual telegrams. Explain that since there is a word charge for telegrams, the writer makes the message as brief as possible.

3. Ask the students to pretend that they are sending the message below as a telegram. Have them cross out all unnecessary words and then rewrite the message as briefly as possible. Tell them to include all vital information when they fill in the telegram blank.

   Example:

   Dear Aunt Sarah,

   Summer vacation in the city is pleasant but I would love to accept your invitation to stay with you on the farm. I will be arriving on Monday the twenty-third.

   The train leaves here at 9:00 a.m. and will arrive in Newberry Station at 12:30 p.m. I hope you don't mind if I bring my pet kitten.

UNION TELEGRAM COMPANY

TO _____

_____

_____

FROM _____

EVALUATION

Can students demonstrate their understanding of key words when they write telegrams? Do they communicate their message? Can they justify their selection of words?

NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

PURPOSE

Newspaper headlines capture a message in brief form. Students will understand the function of key words by seeing the relationship between the headlines and the details of a newspaper story.

PROCEDURE

1. Present a brief newspaper item and direct the students to read the article for its message.

2. Discuss their understanding of the article. List the facts presented.

3. Direct attention to the article's headline and its function. Point out that it summarizes the main idea.

4. Repeat with other articles for more practice.

5. Present another brief article omitting the headline.

6. Write three possible headlines on the chalkboard: One, a detail taken from the article; another, an irrelevant statement and the third, an appropriate headline.

7. Have students select the appropriate headline and justify the selection.

8. Repeat with other articles.

EVALUATION

Can students see the relationship between headline and article? Do they understand what key words are by seeing that relationship?

SIGNAL WORDS

PURPOSE

A good reader is aware that sometimes key words signal an author's organization of ideas. These often fall into such categories as time markers; (before, then, soon, finally, etc.) more-to-come signals; (also, besides, furthermore, etc.), concluding or summarizing signals, (therefore, for this reason, etc.); and signals of order, (first, second or (1), (2), etc.).

PROCEDURE

1. Develop an understanding of signal words by presenting separate lessons for each category.

2. Use these steps:

   a. Prepare or select brief paragraphs containing a specific type of signal word. Underline signal words.

   Examples:

   Time Markers

   Before Mr. Jones became principal, he was an English teacher. Earlier in his life he was a taxi cab driver.

   More-to-Say Signals

   Many people like to collect interesting objects. For example, my friend Jerry collects old junk bottles.

   Both Sides Signals

   America is often said to be the land of opportunity, but opportunities only come to those who are able to recognize them.

   Concluding or Summarizing Signals

   Unless you know what kind of person you are, how can you know what you want in life? Therefore, never get yourself so busy you don't have time to know yourself.

   Signals of Order

   It is easy to get to my home. First, go down Peach Street for a half mile. Second, turn left at Oak Street and go until you come to a big green house.

b. Instruct students to read the paragraph and discuss the function of the underlined word.

c. Provide additional two-sentence paragraphs for practice in identifying a particular kind of signal words.

3. Provide additional paragraphs for practice.

EVALUATION

Students' responses and justifications indicate that signal words contribute to the meaning of a paragraph.

KEY WORDS IN PARAGRAPHS

PURPOSE

Students using key words are actively processing the message and attending to language cues. The flexibility of this basic technique allows the teacher to focus on key words related to specific purposes for reading.

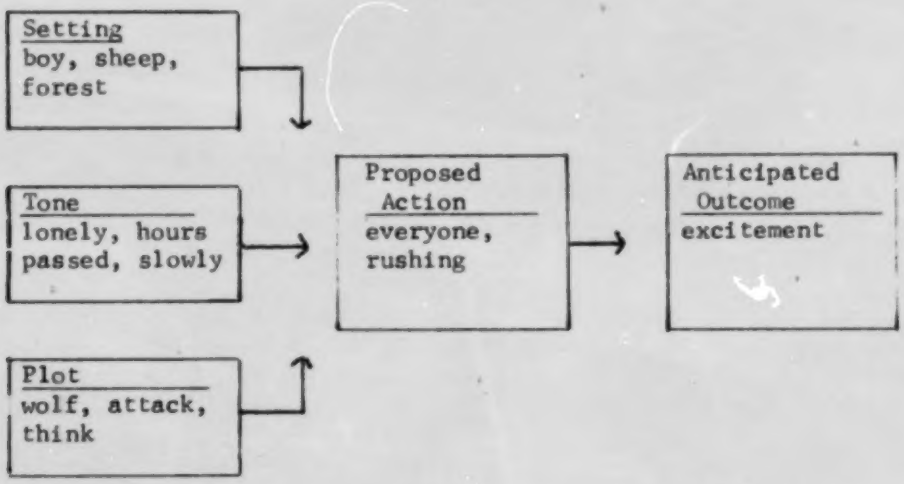
1. noting character development
2. identifying elements such as plot, setting, tone
3. recognizing author's purpose in writing
4. determining specific organization - main idea, focus, details

PROCEDURE

1. Select and duplicate paragraphs with specific purposes as listed above.

   Example a: Structured overview developing setting, tone, and plot

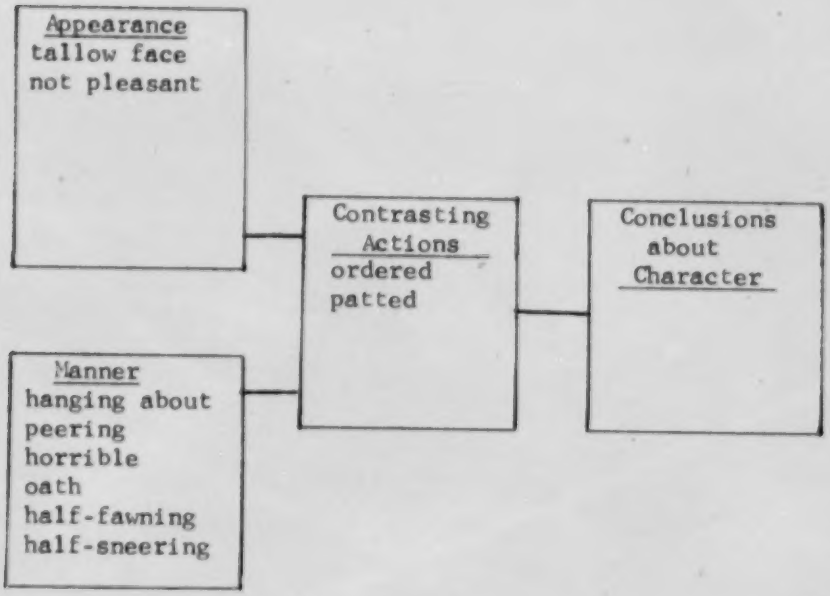
   A shepherd boy went out to the hills everyday with his father's sheep. The pasture was a lonely spot beside a dark forest. The hours passed slowly. The boy often longed for some company to make time pass faster. He began to think it might be fun if a wolf came to attack his sheep. Then everyone would come rushing, and there would be excitement for a change. *



* Aesop's Fables. The Boy Who Cried Wolf.

Example b: Structured overview to note character development

The expression of his face as he said these words was not at all pleasant, and I had my own reasons for thinking that the stranger was mistaken. He kept hanging about just inside the inn door, peering round the corner like a cat waiting for a mouse. Once I stepped out myself into the road, but he immediately called me back, and, as I did not obey quick enough for his fancy, a most horrible change came over his tallowy face, and he ordered me in, with an oath that made me jump. As soon as I was back again he returned to his former manner, half fawning, half sneering, patted me on the shoulder, told me I was a good boy, and he had taken quite a fancy to me.*



2. Direct the students to underline the key words which reflect the specific purpose for reading the selected paragraph, as illustrated in the examples.

3. Ask students to paraphrase the selection using the key words.

---

* Stevenson, Robert Louis, Treasure Island, New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911, p. 13.

Suggestions for varying procedure:

Have students underline the key words and represent the paragraph with a structured overview.

Present a paragraph without any underlined words but with a structured overview. Direct the students to select a set number of key words to complete the overview.

EVALUATION

Students are able to select key words which reflect the organization of the paragraph. They are able to paraphrase selections using key words.

CLOZE PROCEDURE

Cloze is a procedure in which selected words deleted from a passage are replaced. It is related to closure, the tendency of the senses to complete any unfinished whole. Although cloze is frequently associated with testing for instructional placement, completing a clozed passage is a thinking activity involving previous experiences and a sense of linguistic propriety in the context surrounding each deletion. Replacing deletions requires students to read ahead or reread the previous content to choose an appropriate replacement.

Cloze exercises directed to such specific factors as grammatical functions, related past experiences and the use of contextual cues are helpful in improving reading comprehension.

Analyzing cloze responses with students can provide teachers with insights as to specific areas of comprehension in which students need further instruction.

Abilities students have gained through generating their own questions, responding to open-ended questions and categorizing and identifying key words will help them in making selections for closure.

Arrangement of words, phrases and sentences - sentence sequence
Vocabulary/concept development
Grammatical functions
Vocabulary/concept development and descriptors
Selection of rhyming words in cloze framework

ARRANGEMENT OF WORDS, PHRASES AND SENTENCES — SENTENCE SEQUENCE

PURPOSE

Selecting options which make sense and provide sequence for the paragraph and justifying these choices will aid students' comprehension.

PROCEDURE

1. Give the following material to students:

   - Mother opened the kitchen door quietly. _____ (Choose a, b or c.) _____. The children all called out, "Surprise, surprise!"

     a. The room was surprisingly clean.
     b. On the table was a beautiful birthday cake.
     c. The horses were all in a huddle.

   - Slumping in the life boat, the survivors watched the ship slip from sight. _____ (Choose a, b or c.) _____. Suddenly, they shouted, "Land, land!"

     a. They searched the horizon for a sign of help.
     b. They rowed for days across an empty sea.
     c. They climbed wearily up the beach.

2. Have students restore sentences which provide continuity to the paragraph.

3. Discuss the choices in terms of function in providing meaningful continuity.

4. When the students are familiar with the process for selecting appropriate sequential sentences, continue with a more difficult exercise such as the following:

   Have students read the following passage and then write one or more sentences that will provide an appropriate sequence between the beginning and the ending.

   Beginning: As he looked up from the TV set, he saw the newspaper crawling slowly across the living room floor. _____

   _____

   Ending: Boy, was I relieved when I saw it was only Jack.

Beginning: While exploring an attic in an old house, we smelled smoke and ran to the door, but it was locked. _____

_____

Ending: Thank goodness for nice people!

EVALUATION

Students can select or generate sentences which provide continuity in the passage.

VOCABULARY/CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE

Students learn to select from options the appropriate word to suit the context of each sentence; correct choices draw the sentence into a meaningful passage.

PROCEDURE

Make up a simple exercise containing several sentences (see example below). Direct students to read and select the word which is most appropriate. Point out the need to read the text before and after the options.

Directions to the student:

In each sentence, there are two words underlined. Circle the one that makes sense.

It was William's birthday/beginning. He was having a party with his family/flowers. Because his birthday was in August, and the winter/weather was nice and warm, the plan/party was in William's back pocket/yard. There were houses/games of "Balloon Tag" and "Peanut Hunt" and there were hot apples/dogs and slices of ice-cold watermelon/fish to eat. After that, William opened his gifts/eyes. Last of all, when it was almost dark, Mother brought out a big package/cake with seven candles.

"Make a circle/wish, William," said Dad.

"You have to blow/sing out all the candles at once," said his friend, Mark. "That's right," said Mother. "If you do, you'll get your wish before your next balloon/birthday."

"Take a deep breath and close your mouth/eyes," said William's sister.

"Blow," said everyone all at once.

William yelled/blew and out went all the candles.

EVALUATION

Students justify choices in relation to the whole passage.

GRAMMATICAL FUNCTIONS

PURPOSE

Students will reinforce their knowledge of syntactic function by replacing deletions with a word having the same function as that of the deleted word.

PROCEDURE

1. Prepare several passages from materials at appropriate levels omitting a selected part of speech.

2. Have students respond by supplying an appropriate word for each deletion.

3. Have students analyze responses, explaining how their choices make sense.

Sample a: Monster and the little boy lived in the city. One day the little boy (_____), "Come on, let's (_____) a ride on the bus." So Monster (_____) the little boy on the bus so that he could have a ride.

Evaluation:

Students recognize the appropriateness of their choices.

See following page for Sample b.

Sample b:

We often think of insects as being harmful. This is partly true. Many __(1)__ are harmful. Flies carry __(2)__. Other insects carry disease, too. Farmers are at __(3)__ with insects most of the __(4)__. Hungry insects kill __(5)__ in the fields. Farmers spray the __(6)__ to get rid of these insects. Does this mean that all __(7)__ are harmful? No. Many are of great __(8)__ to man. Bees make honey. Without __(9)__ and other insects, many __(10)__ would have no fruit. Silkworms make __(11)__. Some insects eat other insects that kill fruit __(12)__. Long ago, many __(13)__ thought of most insects as __(14)__. Today, we know the difference between harmful insects and those that help us.

KEY

1. insects
2. disease
3. war
4. time
5. plants
6. fields
7. insects
8. help
9. bees
10. trees
11. silk
12. trees
13. people
14. enemies

(Fold back the right portion which lists the nouns. Have students read the entire passage and supply a sensible word for each blank. Have students support their word choices. When they are finished, discuss the function of nouns and their syntactic placement in sentences.)

Evaluation:

1. Students generate appropriate words to show their understanding of noun function.

2. Students respond to such literal comprehension questions related to the whole passage as:
   What do farmers spray?
   How can flies be harmful to man?

Sample c:

Students supply a word which best fits each blank space. Discuss the importance of reading around the missing word to gain clues as to what is appropriate. Discuss the importance of trial and error in making choices from the provided word list.

I remember him as if it were _____, as he came _____to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow; a tall, _____, heavy, nut-brown man; his tarry pig-tail _____over the shoulders of his soiled blue coat; his hands ragged and _____, with black, broken nails; and the sabre

cut across one _____, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking round the cove and _____ to himself as he did so, and then _____ out in an old sea-song that he sang often afterwards in a high old _____ voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the village _____. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a _____ and when my father appeared, called _____ for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, _____ on the taste and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our _____.

The man who came with the barrow told us the mail had set him down the morning before at the "Royal George"; that he had _____ what inns there were along the coast, and hearing ours well _____of, I suppose, and described as lonely, had chose it from the others for his place of _____. And that was all we could learn of our guest.

He was a very _____ man by custom. All day he hung round the cove, or upon the cliffs, with a brass telescope; all _____ he sat in a corner of the _____ next the fire, and drank rum and water very strong. Mostly he would not speak when spoken to; only look up sudden and _____, and blow through his nose like a fog-horn; and we and the people who came about our house soon learned to let him be. Every day, when he came back from his _____, he would ask if any seafaring men had gone along by the road? At first we thought it was the want of _____ of his own kind that make him ask this question; but at last we began to see he was desirous to _____ them. When a seaman put up at the "Admiral Benbow" (as now and then some did, making by the coast road for Bristol), he would look in at him through the _____ door before he entered the parlour; and he was always sure to be as silent as a _____ when any such was present. *

*Stevenson, R. L. Treasure Island, N.Y. Scribner 1911

Word List:

Nouns		Verb Forms	Descriptors
cheek	company	falling	scarred
bars	mouse	plodding	tottering
signboard	stroll	whistling	silent
parlour		inquired	strong
yesterday		lingering	curtained
handspike		breaking	roughly
evening		spoken	fierce
residence		avoid	

Evaluation:

Students can answer questions about the completed passage. Can students supply reasonable alternatives?

VOCABULARY/CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIPTORS

PURPOSE

Students will learn that the author's sensitivity is demonstrated by the use of precise words.

PROCEDURE

1. Duplicate passages of approximately 225 words, deleting key words and focusing upon nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

2. Direct students to read the passage and ask them to tell you what they think it is about.

3. Ask the following questions: What words can you supply in the blanks that would help the passage make sense? Why is your choice more precise than any other? Which are the best descriptive words?

   Example:

   On the morning of Friday, June the thirteenth, Arthur Brott

[illegible] REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

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You know what they say..."*

Provide the following descriptors which were used by the author for later comparison and discussion.

1.	thick	7.	weird	13.	silly
2.	slathered	8.	uneasy	14.	dropped
3.	plop	9.	substituted	15.	spider
4.	groaned	10.	spiders	16.	sang
5.	glop	11.	cracks	17.	smoothed
6.	sloppiness	12.	bread	18.	gravely

EVALUATION

Students can identify descriptive words based on the passage's context. They can give reasons for choosing certain words. They can understand why their choices may differ from the author's.

---

* Nisenholt, Judy. A Bat in the Attic, Superbook. Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1977, p. 105

SELECTION OF RHYMING WORDS IN CLOZE FRAMEWORK

PURPOSE

Students use previous experience and passage content to supply rhyming words.

PROCEDURE

1. Direct students to read and furnish words that rhyme and make sense. (Do a practice exercise first so that students understand rhyming couplets.) Have them discuss their choices.

   Sample: a. A rooster's unruffled
   Abroad or at home,
   Because he always
   Carries a _____.

   b. If you don't know the four seasons,
   It's certainly not my fault;
   Once again, they're vinegar, oil,
   Pepper and _____.

   c. As the tadpole said
   From under a log,
   "My tale is ended,
   And now I'm a _____".

   d. As the cabbage said,
   But just in fun,
   "Two heads are always
   Better than _____". *

   Evaluation:

   Students identify the rhyming sounds correctly and justify their choices. They can answer such questions as: Does _____ rhyme with _____? What is the rhyme about?

2. Select stanzas from a rhymed poem at a comprehension level suitable for the students. Vary and fade cues as in the following example and elicit responses and reasons from students.

---

* Assorted limericks from Beaver County, Pennsylvania.

Example:

"But wait, a bit," the Oyster cried,
"Before we have our chat:
"For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are f_____!"
"No hurry!" said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for th_____.

"A loaf of bread," the Walrus said,
"Is what we chiefly need:
Pepper and vinegar besides
Are very good in_____."
"Now, if you're ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to f_____."

"But not on us!" the Oysters cried
Turning a little blue.
"After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to _____."
"The night is fine," the Walrus said.
"Do you admire the _____?"

"It was so kind of you to come!
And you are very _____!"
The Carpenter said nothing but
"Cut us another _____.
I wish you were not quite so deaf--
I've had to ask you _____!

"It seems a shame," the Walrus said
"To play them such a (_____)
After we've brought them out so far,
And made them trot so (_____)!
The Carpenter said nothing but
"The butter's spread too (_____)!"*

Evaluation:

Students can make suitable closures in rhyming situations. They are relatively skillful in this kind of exercise.

---

* Carroll, Lewis, Through the Looking Glass

DIRECTIONS FOR BUILDING A CLOZE EXERCISE:

1. Select a passage of suitable length, format and readability. Make sure that there are enough cues to make closure possible.

2. Decide on the instructional purpose: vocabulary development, use of syntax, precise use of synonyms, etc.

3. Determine a deletion pattern which fits your objective.

   Example:

   a. Delete only nouns, verbs, adjectives which are spaced between six and twelve words apart.

   b. Delete only prepositions and conjunctions.

   c. Delete only every __th word.

   d. Delete only words which have several synonyms with slight shadings of differences.

   (Deletions in entry level activities should occur at intervals no closer than every tenth to twelfth word. In more difficult exercises, the space between deletions may be reduced to as narrow a span as every fifth or sixth word.)

4. Keep first and last sentences intact as major cues.

5. Determine the pattern of response to be made:

   - Free choice by student
   - Choice from two or more options which are all grammatically plausible
   - Choice from two or more options which are all semantically plausible

6. Avoid deletion of number words, color words, key words or proper names unless passage gives explicit cues which control appropriate choices.

7. Identify the instructional purpose clearly for students and include precise directions for completion.

Cloze can be used in combination with other instructional strategies for improving comprehension. The completion of a cloze exercise may be followed by the student's paraphrasing the selection orally or in writing. Students might make lists of likely substitutions and discuss the changes in meaning of the paragraph as the various replacements are made, a form of categorizing words. Practice in identifying key words in paragraphs can be followed by the development of a cloze paragraph with the key words deleted to determine the significance of the skill. The intent in using the cloze procedure should be to give deeper insight into meaning as students weigh evidence and make decisions using their experiential background and reacting to new ideas in print.

CATEGORIZATION

Categorization involves sorting, grouping and labeling words, phrases and ideas by recognizing commonalities and differences of form and function. As students sort, group and label they draw upon their experiential background. They classify and analyze relationships among parts of a whole.

Sorting and grouping
Using common characteristics
Noting the differences as well as the likenesses
  in characteristics
Categorizing by form and function
Applying form and function to syntax
Introducing vocabulary through categorization
Recognizing that a topic sentence functions as a
  category label
Using categorization to understand characterization
Comparing and contrasting - analysis and synthesis

SORTING AND GROUPING

PURPOSE

By grouping items from unsorted lists related to a topic, students become aware of word and phrase meanings. Sorting and grouping are the initial steps in categorizing. The process can be applied at any level of maturity in suitable degrees of complexity.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students generate a random list of items such as the things to take to a picnic, or to buy for a birthday party, or things found in the kitchen.

2. Have the students sort the listed items into groups by asking such a question as: Are there any items on the list that are alike in some way?

   Example: Items for a picnic might be grouped under such general labels as food, eating utensils, and sports equipment.

Foods	Utensils	Sports Equipment
frankfurters	knives	bats
hamburgers	forks	balls
pickles	plates	racquets
potato chips	cups	frisbies

3. Explore ways to regroup, looking at differences such as foods requiring cooking and foods that are ready to eat; things to throw, things which are used to hit balls, etc.

EVALUATION

By sorting and grouping items from a random assortment, students examine attributes and group items which are alike or different. This step in concept development enables students to make decisions about word meanings through seeing relationships among words.

USING COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

PURPOSE

Students will recognize that the common characteristics present in a general class of items are important to concept definition.

PROCEDURE

1. Using lists of items such as fruits, fish, or animals, have students list the ways in which some items on a list are alike. For example, apples and oranges are edible, round, brightly colored and sweet. Each has skins and seeds.

2. Test to see if these common characteristics are true of all fruits on the list.

EVALUATION

By recognizing the common characteristics true of some or all items in a general class or category, students begin developing an understanding of the concept which a category represents.

NOTING THE DIFFERENCES AS WELL AS THE LIKENESSES IN CHARACTERISTICS

PURPOSE

Noting differences which discriminate among items with common characteristics refines student ability to be precise in determining meanings.

PROCEDURE

1. Using the procedures outlined in the preceding activity, list the characteristics of two items in a general category such as child and adult.

2. List the attributes of each - identify those which are alike and those that are different, distinguishing between the two. For example:

Child	Adult	
small	large	different
light	heavy	different
two-legged	two-legged	similar
blinks	blinks	similar
weak	strong	different

3. Use other pairs in the same way. For example: an apple and an orange; post office and library; car and truck; knife and fork.

4. Discuss ways in which items in each pair are similar and different.

EVALUATION

Students acquire skill in noting likenesses and differences in related items.

CATEGORIZING BY FORM AND FUNCTION

PURPOSE

Students recognize that many attributes or characteristics which define or limit meaning can usually be classified as either form or function.

PROCEDURE

1. Develop an understanding of form or function by using the attributes of a common class of utensil such as the knife. Have students examine two knives which have different attributes of form and different functions or uses. For example, display a butter spreader and a paring knife. Ask students to classify each by listing the attributes which describe its form or physical characteristics and the functions of each.

2. Discuss the common characteristics of form and function and those which discriminate between the two knives. For example:

Butter Spreader

Form	Function	
Blade	Spread	butter or foods of similar hardness
Rounded		
Dull edges		
Broad at end of blade	Cut	cream cheese spreads
Narrow at base		
Handle		

Paring Knife

Form	Function	
Blade	Peel	foods of medium hardness
Pointed		
Sharp edge	Cut)	
Handle	Slice)---	vegetables, fruits, etc.
	Chop)	

EVALUATION

Students display their understanding of form and function.

APPLYING FORM AND FUNCTION TO SYNTAX

PURPOSE

Students will recognize that both the form of written words and their function or use in phrases or sentences is essential to comprehension of written language. Learning to differentiate words with multiple meanings by using form and function is an aid in understanding.

PROCEDURE

1. Ask the students to read a set of sentences which illustrate multiple meanings:

   Helen struck the wrong key on the piano.
   The children looked at the answer key for the arithmetic problems.
   Did you lose your car key?

2. Discuss the function of key in each sentence, both its use as a name and the different meaning key has in each sentence.

3. Categorize each meaning of key by form and function. Discuss influence of context on form and function

4. Point out that in spite of differences in meaning, key is used to name something in each sentence.

5. Repeat with several other words having multiple meanings but the same form (spelling). They may have varied syntactic functions (name, action word, descriptor, etc.) such as: cold, finish, row, leaves, strike, arm, march, etc.

EVALUATION

Students can use form and function to distinguish among multiple meanings of a word.

INTRODUCING VOCABULARY THROUGH CATEGORIZATION

PURPOSE

Students should use knowledge of both form and function in discovering and recalling meanings of words as they are used in text.

PROCEDURE

1. Use a passage from a reading selection appropriate to the students' instructional levels and interests. For example, the following selection from From Skyscrapers to Squirrels*:

   On days when there is no school, Mr. Samuels takes

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   cars and bicycles.

2. Introduce the selection by giving a brief overview. This is a story about a seaport in Israel. It is located, etc.

3. Have students generate questions about the story and read silently to find answers to their questions.

4. After they have read the story, have students list the words that are important. See key words, p. 20.

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* Van Roekel, Byron and Kluwe, Mary Jean, From Skyscrapers to Squirrels, Design for Reading, New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1973, p. 24.

5. Have students categorize the words from the list. Group and label, as an aid to recall.

   Example:

   Discuss function of words by asking which are used as names, (business, kepah, etc.) and which are used to describe (old, new, floating) things in the selection. Discuss everyday dress using both form and function of everyday dress, kepahs and robes, as aids to meaning. Recognize that a topic sentence functions as a category label.

EVALUATION

Students can apply similar procedures in studying vocabulary in other selections.

RECOGNIZING THAT A TOPIC SENTENCE FUNCTIONS AS A CATEGORY LABEL

PURPOSE

The student sees that a paragraph is composed of a general idea under which the other ideas in the paragraph may be grouped and sub-grouped.

PROCEDURE

Using the selection in the preceding activity, have the students reread the fourth paragraph, using the question, "What makes the streets colorful?" as a starting point for details.

EVALUATION

Students can identify the sentence in other paragraphs which function as category labels.

USING CATEGORIZATION TO UNDERSTAND CHARACTERIZATION

PURPOSE

Sorting and categorizing the attributes of characters in literary selections help students to understand the characters and their behavior.

PROCEDURE

1. Using any short story at an appropriate level of difficulty, discuss the techniques authors use to reveal character. After the initial orientation, present the students with a list of categories that represent the various methods used.

   Example:

   a. Direct statements by the author
   b. Description of the character, his clothing, his environment
   c. The character's actions
   d. The character's speech
   e. The character's thoughts
   f. The remarks others make to the character
   g. The remarks others make about the character
   h. The reactions of others to the character
   i. The character's reaction to others

2. Using the techniques listed above as category labels, prepare charts which will help students use these categories to understand the characters. (See example on the following page.)

3. Have the students make a chart which will categorize similarities and differences exhibited on the set of charts prepared in Step 2.

EVALUATION

Students can identify attributes of the characters in stories they have read and can make judgments about these characters based on their attributes.

Example:

Using O'Henry's "After Twenty Years" have students analyze the character of Jimmy and Silky Bob.

Category b

Description of the character, his clothing, his environment	
Jimmy	Silky Bob

Category c

The characters' actions	
Jimmy	Silky Bob

Category d

The characters' speech	
Jimmy	Silky Bob

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING — ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

PURPOSE

Categorization enables the reader to analyze similar selections and organize the content of the selections to respond to questions on literal and inferential levels.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students read two selections with a common theme such as "The Man Who Lit the World" and "Singing the Blues"* and set up data charts about the central characters as described in the preceding activity.

Similarities	Differences	
	Edison	Charles
both handicapped	deaf	blind
creators	scholarly	no mention of school
fighters		
encouraging families	inventor	musician
famous	dead	alive
	assertive	unsure

Categories of Differences	Edison	Charles
handicapped	deaf	blind
education	scholar	no schooling
career	inventor	musician
historical data	dead	alive
qualities of personality	assertive	unsure of his worth

2. Use information from the chart to answer such questions as:

   a. What does Tom's constant questioning as a boy tell you about the man he was to become? (interested in learning and ideas; a hard worker; a determined person)

* "The Man Who Lit the World: Thomas Edison" - F. A. Jameson
"Singing the Blues: Ray Charles" - F. A. Jameson

b. Why do you think Tom was able to overcome the handicap of being partially deaf? (He was a person not easily discouraged by obstacles. His work did not depend upon his hearing.)

c. What influence, if any, did Ray's parents have on his life? How do you think he felt about them? (Ray's parents were devoted, hard working people who struggled against poverty and racial discrimination. They were united in their attempt to give their son all they could and helped start him on the road to overcoming his blindness.)

d. Why do you think Ray Charles turned to drugs? What enabled him to kick the habit? (Drugs possibly made him feel better about himself; he may have used them because they were common among his friends. He was able to kick the habit through determination and self-will.)

3. Analyze the themes:

How do the authors develop their common theme? Give examples. (They contrast failure or hardship with success or accomplishment, and show that man is capable of courageous behavior in the face of great difficulty.)

EVALUATION

By using categorization and relating items in the different selections, students respond to questions on an analytic and inferential level.

CONCEPT ATTAINMENT

The model of concept attainment developed by Dorothy Frayer is a process that uses reading content to increase understanding of the unfamiliar.

The concept attainment model requires the reader to 1) locate or devise an appropriate definition of a concept, if given in the text, 2) look for the attributes which define a concept, 3) identify examples and non-examples, and 4) recognize relationships between related concepts. Students should become skilled in using the process step by step, until they can independently glean information and clarify concepts in written material.

Concept attainment is closely allied to the strategies for using questioning, categorizing, and key words. Students ask questions related to unfamiliar concepts, classify attributes, and select essential key words useful in defining a concept.

Locating or devising a concept definition
Distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant facts (attributes)
Identifying examples and non-examples
Recognizing relationships between concepts
Concept attainment in literary content

LOCATING OR DEVISING A CONCEPT DEFINITION

PURPOSE

Students will learn to locate or devise a concept definition. Initially, teachers will follow the lesson development according to the prescribed steps. Eventually, students will develop independence in following the steps of the process. The teacher will prepare a set of related activities which illustrate each of the steps in the concept.

PROCEDURE

1. Have the students read the selection to find what nomads are. As they read, ask them to look for words that tell what nomads do by themselves.

MORE ABOUT DESERT NOMADS*

The nomads of the hot, dry lands in Africa and Arabia get much of their living from their animals. In such lands, camels do most of the carrying and are called "ships of the desert." The nomads get meat and milk from their camels. They also use camels' hair to make cloth.

In addition, these people keep herds of sheep and goats from which they get meat, milk, and cheese. They use goats' hair to make coverings for tents, which are the nomads' homes. They use sheep's wool to make yarn and cloth. The nomads also trade some of their products for other things they need.

In parts of these desert lands, donkeys are raised and used for riding, for carrying loads, and for drawing buckets of water from wells. Many nomads also raise horses, often for use in war. The poorer tribes sometimes use horses in trying to rob or overcome traders or other tribes. Rich tribes use horses to protect themselves.

*New Practice Reader, Book C, p. 54 1947, Webster Publishing Company

2. Ask students the words that tell what nomads do by themselves.

Suggested responses:

Nomads get much of their living from animals.
Nomads get meat and milk from camels.
Nomads use camels' hair to make cloth.
Nomads keep herds of sheep and goats.
Nomads make coverings for tents.

Nomads make yarn and cloth.
Nomads trade some of their products.
Nomads raise horses.
Nomads use horses in war,
in robbing, and
to protect themselves.

3. Help students make a list of facts which describe nomads, such as:

   Nomads are people.
   Nomads get much of their living from animals.
   Nomads live in tents.
   Nomads live in desert lands.

4. Help students combine these facts into a sentence that describes nomads.

   Example:

   Nomads are people who get much of their living from animals and live in tents with tribes in desert lands.

EVALUATION

Students agree on a definition of nomads.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN RELEVANT AND IRRELEVANT FACTS (ATTRIBUTES)

PURPOSE

Students will be able to discriminate between relevant and irrelevant attributes.

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to determine all the relevant (true characteristics of all nomads) and irrelevant attributes. (Teacher should have previously planned questions that will help students do the task.) Questions which require the following processes will be useful in guiding students.

   a. prediction
   b. analysis of presented facts
   c. analysis of predictions
   d. sorting relevant and irrelevant information
   e. discarding irrelevant information

   Samples of such questions:

   a. prediction
      - What do you think the picture on page _____ explains?
      - Can you think of any other people who get much of their living from animals?
      - Can you think of any other people who live in tents or in tribes?

   b. analysis of presented facts
      - What is meant by getting a living from animals? What kinds of foods and clothing do we get from animals? What animals provide food and clothing for people?
      - What is meant by living in a tent? Why don't all people live in tents? Why do some people live in tents?
      - What are the problems that are caused by living in desert lands? Why do some people live in desert lands?
      - How is living in tribes different from how we live? Why do some people live in tribes? Why don't we live in tribes?

   c. analysis of prediction
      - Let's see whether our predictions about what kinds of people might be nomads are true.

        Are farmers nomads? Are they people? Do they get much of their living from animals? Do they

live in tents? Do they live in tribes? Do they live in desert lands? No, farmers are not nomads. All of the attributes of nomads do not fit farmers. What is true of nomads that is not true of farmers?

Are campers nomads? Are they people? Do they get much of their living from animals? Do they live in tents? Do they live in tribes? Do they live in desert lands? No, campers are not nomads. All of the attributes of nomads do not fit campers. What is true of nomads that is not true of campers?

d. sorting relevant and irrelevant information
   - List all the information that was given in the article about nomads.
   - Put a star beside all the facts that are always true about all nomads. These are the relevant attributes.

e. discarding irrelevant information
   - Cross out all the facts that are not always true about all nomads. These are the irrelevant attributes.

2. Have students respond to questions and select relevant attributes.

3. Have students test definition against relevant attributes.

EVALUATION

Students will accept definition as tested.

IDENTIFYING EXAMPLES AND NON-EXAMPLES OF NOMADS

PURPOSE

Students will be able to distinguish true nomads from other people who have some similarities but not all the required attributes.

PROCEDURE

1. Provide students with paragraphs which illustrate examples and non-examples of the concept "nomads."

    a. The Johnsons moved all their belongings including the goat, the horse and the house pets to the Desert of Maine. They joined a community of people who lived in tents that summer and made their own clothes. When cold winter weather came, they moved back to town.

    b. Sam and Beth Onway spent the summer living in a tent on a ranch in New Mexico. Once a week they had to carry water and food from the next town. Indian tribes traded clothing with them.

    c. The boy pulled his hood across his face to screen the blowing sand from his eyes. He led the goat to the shelter behind the tent. His mother needed milk for the baby and he was the only one left at home who could milk. The man of the tribe had taken the camels and gone to trade skins with a neighboring tribe.

2. Help students to determine examples and non-examples by asking such questions as:

    . Do any of the paragraphs describe a family of nomads?
    . Why are some of the people described not nomads?

EVALUATION

Students will discriminate between examples which illustrate a a concept and those which do not.

RECOGNIZING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CONCEPTS

PURPOSE

Students will learn to see relationships between concepts which have similar but not identical attributes.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students examine pairs of closely related concepts, such as:

nomads/tents	citizens/houses or towns
nomads/tribal laws	citizens/government

2. Have students describe the way in which tents are related to nomads.

3. Have students select another pair of concepts which illustrates the same relationship.

4. Have students repeat with remaining concept pairs.

5. Have students develop concept pairs that illustrate other relationships.

EVALUATION

Students will be able to see relationships between differing concepts.

CONCEPT ATTAINMENT IN LITERARY CONTENT

PURPOSE

Students will learn to use the model to clarify concepts found in literature.

PROCEDURE

Students will follow these steps to become independent in the process.

1. Using an excerpt from the novel, Watership Down,* students will read the material and determine an appropriate definition of "warren." (The novel does not give a definition. However, the concept is developed through description.)

   The new hole was short, narrow and rough. There was no

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weather to change.*

2. Using the text, have students write down the relevant attributes (true characteristics of all warrens).

   smooth holes and tunnels
   smelling of rabbit
   not penetrated by wind
   easily drained of rain
   wide enough for two rabbits to pass
   built by other rabbits

3. Have the students determine non-examples which are given.

   Non-examples: The new hole was short, narrow and rough. There was no room for two rabbits to pass. The wind brought the rain driving into the mouth of the hole. A narrow, drafty pit.

4. Have students list the attributes of the new hole which prove that it is not a warren.

5. After clarifying the concept to this point, have students determine relationship between "warren" and dwelling.

   "There is nothing like bad weather to reveal the shortcomings of a dwelling, particularly if it is too small."

6. Have students extend their understanding of concept "warren" by determining relationships.

   house/home shelter/haven

EVALUATION

Students have attained concept "warren" and seen its relationship to other concept.

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* Adams, Richard, Watership Down, New York, N.Y. Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1972.

PARAPHRASING AND SUMMARIZING

This section deals with ways in which the reader can integrate or synthesize information and understandings. Communication meanings in verbal or written form is a culminating step in reading comprehension. Both paraphrasing and summarizing are strategies which help students clarify ideas gained from reading. Paraphrasing requires substitution and reordering of words and other elements. Summarizing requires determination of main ideas and selection of those details vital to a meaningful condensation of the passage.

Paraphrasing the sentence
Rearranging order
Generating headlines or captions
Locating significant details
Focusing on details
Using outlining to clarify meaning
Combining sentences
Using sentence combinations in summarizing a paragraph

PARAPHRASING THE SENTENCE

PURPOSE

Restatement of the ideas expressed in a sentence integrates students' understandings of word meanings and syntactic structures.

PROCEDURE

1. Using procedures described in Key Words identifies the elements in a sentence taken from expository prose selections at appropriate reading and interest levels.

   Example:

   Space exploration continues. Men from both the Soviet Union and the United States have left their spaceships to take "walks in space." Both nations have landed vehicles on the moon. The Soviet Union has used a woman "cosmonaut" to orbit the earth. United States spacemen have walked on the moon's surface. The pictures they relayed of their "walks" and "rides" on the moon have thrilled viewers all over the earth. Scientists are studying the rocks they brought back to learn more about the age of the moon and how it was formed. In 1975, United States and Soviet spacemen joined their spacecrafts together 140 miles above the earth's surface.*

   *Schwartz, Melvin and O'Connor, John R., The New Exploring the Non-Western World, New York, N.Y., Globe Book Company Inc., 1976, p. 401

2. Have the students analyze the underlined sentence using the "wh" questions: who? what? when? where? which?

   Examples:

   Who? spacemen
   What? spacecrafts, miles, surface
   When? 1975, joined (Past tense indicates that it occurred in the past.)
   Where? above the earth's surface
   Which? United States, Soviet Union

3. Find substitutes for as many key words as possible, using context to determine equivalent expressions.

   Examples: (See following page)

Examples:

spacemen - astronauts
spacecrafts - rocket ships
joined - attached
above the earth's surface - in outer space
United States - American

4. Have students restate the sentence substituting equivalent expressions for key words.

   Example:

   In 1975, American and Soviet astronauts attached their rocket ships 140 miles in outer space.

5. Have students paraphrase other statements from the prose passages or other passages.

6. Students may then compare various paraphrases for the accuracy with which they reflect the author's intended meaning.

EVALUATION

Students will demonstrate ability to comprehend at the sentence level by making accurate restatements of sentence meanings.

REARRANGING ORDER

PURPOSE

Students may rearrange the order of words or phrases in a sentence by altering syntactic forms as needed, but keep the basic meaning of the sentence intact.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students rewrite sentences by rearranging the order of sentence parts, adding additional function words if needed.

   Example:

   a. 1.) In the air, strange goblin-like creatures sailed through the gloomy skies.

      2.) Through the gloomy skies, strange goblin-like creatures sailed in the air.

   b. 1.) During that great length of time, dinosaurs ruled the land.

      2.) The land (was) ruled (by) dinosaurs during that great length of time.

2. As a vocabulary exercise students may substitute a variety of synonyms or equivalent phrases for selected key words in sentences and discuss shading of meaning which results from such substitutions.

   Example:

   Oliver was <u>brave</u> enough to ask for a second portion of gruel.

   Substitute as many words as possible for "brave." Discuss the differences the substitution suggests in Oliver's character and his motives in asking for a second portion.

EVALUATION

Students can reorder sentence parts without changing essential ideas.

GENERATING HEADLINES OR CAPTIONS

PURPOSE

Creating headlines or captions is an aid in identifying main ideas. Writing an original headline offers a creative approach to summarizing the central thought in newspaper articles.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students read several newspaper articles without the headlines. Keep the original headlines for later comparison with student-generated headlines.

2. Ask students to pick out significant details about the events and write a headline, using key words from the section on identifying key words in news articles.

3. Make a list of the suggested headlines and discuss.

   Sample questions:

   Which key words from the article did you use to summarize the events?

   Did you give too much information?

   Would the headline make you want to read the story?

4. Compare student headlines to the original.

   Which is more concise?

   Which headlines most accurately describe the content of the article?

5. Follow a similar procedure with the rest of the articles.

EVALUATION.

Students' headlines reflected their ability to summarize. Students were able to restate the main idea concisely and accurately to report who, what, when, where, why and how in summarizing each article.

LOCATING SIGNIFICANT DETAILS

PURPOSE

Students can locate vital details as an important step in comprehension.

PROCEDURE

1. Have the students read silently a descriptive passage from a selection at an appropriate level of difficulty and draw a picture of the most descriptive elements.

   Example: Night Before Christmas, Alice in Wonderland, Aesop's Fables

2. Direct the students to reread the passage and compare the details in their pictures with those in passage.

3. Discuss results and reinforce attention to details which made pictorial representation more precise.

EVALUATION

Students' pictures included the vital details from the passage. Students were able to explain why they did or did not include certain details in their drawings.

FOCUSING ON DETAILS

PURPOSE

Students will use the skill of summarizing by using important details in writing a want ad.

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to bring a full page of classified ads from old newspapers or magazines for group discussion.
2. Point out the necessity of using only important details in want ads.
3. Ask students to select subjects suitable for a "lost and found" ad.
4. Have students write original ads which include all important details identifying the subject selected.
5. Have the students read their ads to the group.

EVALUATION

Students can determine the necessary detail needed to describe a lost or found object accurately.

USING OUTLINING TO CLARIFY MEANING

PURPOSE

Students will develop an outline of a reading selection which integrates understandings of such processes as categorizing, selecting key words and concept attainment. The form is less important than the display of relationships among main ideas and essential supporting detail.

PROCEDURE

1. Give the students a format for outlining which displays relationships among ideas.

    a. Main headings usually labeled with Roman numerals are statements of the main ideas in each paragraph.

    b. Beneath each main idea, list the important details which illustrate or expand on that idea. These details may be derived through activities described in sections on Key Words, Concept Attainment or Categorization. Details are usually indented and labeled with capital letters (A, B, C etc.).

    c. Sub-group additional listings of minor details under important details as necessary to clarify meaning. Such additions are usually indented under the essential details which each clarifies and are labeled with Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3 etc.).

2. Have students work through an article of several paragraphs using strategies from this publication to develop the main ideas, essential/supporting details, and additional clarifying details.

3. Arrange these in outline form using labels and indentation to show categories, sub-categories and additional subdivisions of categories.

4. Using the outline generated as a guide, students will use all main ideas, essential details and supportable clarifying details in summarizing or paraphrasing the selection.

EVALUATION

Students can summarize and paraphrase selections as a result of outlining.

COMBINING SENTENCES

PURPOSE

Students can combine sentences to show such relationships as cause and effect, condition and outcome, etc.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students read pairs of sentences which illustrate such relationships as cause and effect, condition and outcome, time sequence, illustration or clarification, comparison and contrast.

2. Ask students to combine pairs of sentences like those below into a single sentence which demonstrates the relationship.

   a. Laura Ingalls was considered an individualist. She refused to behave as her parents and neighbors expected.

   b. The sun may shine tomorrow. It may be a good day for a picnic at the beach.

   c. The tax on tea seemed unfair to the citizens of Boston. They threw the tea in the harbor as a protest.

3. Discuss the relationships which are apparent between sentences in each pair.

EVALUATION

Students will combine each set of sentences into a single sentence which demonstrates their relationship.

USING SENTENCE COMBINATIONS IN SUMMARIZING A PARAGRAPH

PURPOSE

By reducing the number of sentences in a paragraph to a single sentence, students will identify the facts, establish relationships among facts and sentences, reorganize information and reconstruct the central thought.

PROCEDURE

1. Divide the students into three working groups.

2. While groups 2 and 3 do independent reading in self-selected materials, have each student in the first group read an assigned paragraph of about ten sentences in length such as:

   Marco Polo was born in Venice, Italy. His father and

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   great travel book to the world.*

3. Ask each of the students in that group to rewrite the paragraph in no more than 5 to 6 sentences, keeping all the important facts in their rewritten versions.

4. While groups 1 and 3 do independent reading, have group 2 read the rewritten passages prepared by group 1 and reduce them to no more than two or three sentences, still keeping the essential facts.

5. While groups 1 and 2 do independent reading, have group 3 write a one-sentence summary of the two- to three-sentence versions of the passage composed by the second group.

6. When the third group has finished summaries, have the entire class read the selection.

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* Jones, D. M., Cooper, J. L., From Coins to Kings, New York, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1964.

7. Discuss versions produced by each group in terms of fidelity to the author's meaning by asking such questions as:

    a. Are all the important details included?

    b. Have the new versions changed the author's intended meaning?

8. Discuss the degree to which the one sentence summary identifies the main idea or central thought of the original paragraph.

9. Repeat this activity giving each group the experience of condensing and summarizing with additional materials in one sentence.

EVALUATION

Students can condense and summarize without losing the author's central thought.

CONCLUSION

Some teaching strategies presented in this publication may be familiar to experienced teachers of reading/language arts. The purpose of this publication has been achieved if the teacher has found some effective ways to increase student's ability to analyze content of reading passages, reorganize that content so that it is more meaningful, and communicate their understandings with others. Whether these strategies are labeled reading, writing or thinking activities is immaterial as long as the outcome is a more proficient reader in any area of study.